

East Corridor Commuter Rail

Nashville, Tennessee

(November 2002)

Description

The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) of Nashville, Tennessee are proposing the implementation of a 31.1-mile, six station commuter rail line between downtown Nashville and the City of Lebanon in Wilson County. The East Corridor commuter rail project is proposed to operate on an existing rail line owned by the Nashville and Eastern Railroad Authority (N&E), a governmental entity comprised of the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT), Wilson County, Lebanon, Mt. Juliet, and the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County. A passing siding will be added, two existing rail yards will be upgraded for vehicle storage and maintenance, and ten passenger rail vehicles will be acquired from the Maryland Rail Commuter Service (MARC) as part of the capital project cost. The required locomotives will be leased as part of the operating cost of the project.

The project is estimated to cost \$37.6 million in escalated dollars, with a proposed Section 5309 New Starts share of \$23.0 million. Because the proposed New Starts share is less than \$25 million, the project is exempt from the New Starts criteria, and is thus not subject to FTA's evaluation and rating (49 USC 5309(e)(8)(A)).

Summary Description	
Proposed Project:	East Corridor Commuter Rail 31.1 Miles, 6 Stations
Total Capital Cost (\$YOE):	\$37.6 Million
Section 5309 New Starts Share (\$YOE):	\$23.0 Million (61%)
Annual Operating Cost (2006 \$YOE):	\$3.0 Million
Ridership Forecast (2006):	1,400 Average Weekday Boardings 700 Daily New Riders
Opening Year Ridership Forecast:	N/A

The project includes a proposed Federal share of 61 percent in Section 5309 New Starts funding. The Administration is seeking legislation that would limit the Federal New Starts share to no more than 50 percent beginning in FY 2004.

Status

In 1996, the MTA and RTA initiated a study to explore the potential of commuter rail in the Nashville region. From this study, six corridors were considered for further evaluation. A 1998 study analyzed the capital costs for the three most promising corridors. As the result of these studies and efforts of the Nashville Area Commuter Rail Task Force -- which includes the Nashville Chamber of Commerce, area business leaders, the MPO, MTA, RTA, the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT), CSX Railroad and the Nashville and Eastern Rail

Authority, and the Nashville Congressional delegation -- the East Corridor was selected as the first corridor to be implemented in the Nashville Area Commuter Rail System.

The Nashville MPO included the East Corridor commuter rail project in its fiscally constrained long range transportation plan in September 1999. The FTA approved the project to advance into Preliminary Engineering in November 1999. The RTA completed an Environmental Assessment and received a Finding of No Significant Impact for the project in May 2000. In June 2001, FTA approved the project to advance into Final Design.

TEA-21 Section 3030(a)(50) authorizes the “Nashville Commuter Rail” project for Final Design and construction. Through FY 2002, Congress has appropriated \$11.87 million for the project.

Locally Proposed Financial Plan		
<u>Proposed Source of Funds</u>	<u>Total Funding (\$million)</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Federal:		
Sec. 5309 New Starts	\$23.0	61.0%
FHWA Intermodal	\$7.1	18.8%
State:		
TDOT – Transit Division	\$3.8	10.1%
Local:		
Wilson County/Davidson County	\$3.8	10.1%
Total:	\$37.6	100.0%

NOTE: Funding proposal reflects assumptions made by project sponsors, and are not DOT or FTA assumptions. Total may not add due to rounding.

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